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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 15 May 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

On this day, the Palestinian people sombrely mark the passage of 66 years since *Al-Nakba*, the tragedy in 1948 in which the majority of Palestinians were forcibly uprooted and expelled from their homes and lands in Mandate Palestine or fled in fear for their lives after the brutal massacres perpetrated by Israeli militias and forces against thousands of innocent Palestinian men, women, children and elderly persons in villages and towns throughout the land in a clear act of ethnic cleansing. Violently displaced and dispossessed, more than 750,000 Palestinians became refugees in other parts of Palestine and in neighbouring countries, namely Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Today, the Palestinian refugees number more than 5 million people, with the majority of them living in refugee camps administered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) throughout the region.

The plight of the Palestine refugees remains at the core of Palestinian history, psyche and struggle for justice and freedom that continues to this day. And, regrettably, the Palestinian people continue to suffer an ongoing *nakba*, as Israel, the occupying Power, persists with its cruel denial of the rights of the Palestinian people and persists with its brutal, blatant and systematic subjugation of the millions of Palestinians under its nearly 47-year military occupation by all illegal, repressive and destructive means and measures.

Demonstrations were held today throughout Occupied Palestine, as elsewhere around the world, to mark the sixty-sixth anniversary of *Al-Nakba* and to call once again for the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people, including their inalienable right to self-determination and right to return, and for the realization of justice, both fundamental for the achievement of real peace and coexistence. Regrettably, Israel, the occupying Power, behaved in a typically violent, aggressive

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manner against the thousands of Palestinian civilians partaking in *Al-Nakba* demonstrations, killing two young Palestinians and injuring dozens of others.

Two of the victims of this senseless Israeli brutality were young Palestinian boys, Muhammed Odeh Abu Al-Thahir, age 15, and Nadim Siyam Nuwarah, age 17, who were shot and killed by the occupying forces today. Al-Thahir and Nuwarah were killed during a demonstration near the Israeli detention centre known as "Ofer" near Ramallah, a demonstration that was convened to commemorate *Al-Nakba* and also as an expression of solidarity with Palestinian prisoners and detainees, including those administrative detainees who have been on hunger strike for 22 days in protest of their captivity and abuse by the occupying Power. The two boys died after being hit by live ammunition to the chest and three other youths were also injured by live fire from the Israeli occupying forces. In other areas, including Al-Khalil, Bethlehem, Nablus and at the Qalandiya checkpoint between Ramallah and Jerusalem, Palestinian civilian protesters suffered injury as a result of the firing by the occupying forces of rubber-coated steel bullets and tear gas canisters, leading to the hospitalization of at least a dozen people.

We condemn the killing and injury of Palestinian civilians by Israel, the occupying Power, and condemn its use of force against peaceful demonstrators simply calling for freedom and justice for their people and for the exercise of their inalienable human rights. We reject all unlawful Israeli measures to repress our calls for justice, including the calls for the right of the Palestine refugees to return, and its relentless attempts to distort, or even erase, the Palestinian history and narrative.

We reiterate that Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable for all of its illegal practices and acts of aggression against the Palestinian people. Today, more than ever, we are reminded of the injustice borne by the Palestinian people for nearly seven decades and appeal to the international community once again, including the Security Council and General Assembly, to uphold their political and moral responsibilities and to act collectively to demand and to ensure the compliance by Israel with all of its obligations under international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, a fundamental prerequisite if we are ever to achieve an end to this tragic conflict and establish genuine peace, security and coexistence.

In closing, I wish to highlight a statement made today by President Mahmoud Abbas in commemorating *Al-Nakba*: "It is time to put an end to the longest occupation in modern history and time for Israel's leaders to understand that there is no other homeland for Palestinians but Palestine."

This letter is in follow-up to our 495 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 5 May 2014 (A/ES-10/626-S/2014/317) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations